

## Message Text

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51

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 USIE-00 ACDA-19

SAJ-01 EB-11 OMB-01 CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SCEM-02 INT-08

SCI-06 EA-11 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 A-01 OPR-02 SY-10 USSS-00 CCO-00

DRC-01 /199 W

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O 171604Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5223

INFO USINT ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

USINT CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANAMA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SANAA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TUNIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 4574

JOINT EMBASSY/USIS MESSAGE

KUWAIT ALSO PASS DOHA AND MUSCAT; BEIRUT ALSO PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA, XF

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SUBJECT: SAUDI PUBLIC REACTION REPORT

SUMMARY: SAUDI PUBLIC OPINION SOLIDLY BEHIND KING AND HIS LARGELY UNSPOKEN BUT OBVIOUS OPEN SUPPORT FOR CONTINUING THE WAR AND DEFYING U.S. AND ITS RESUPPLY EFFORT. KING HAS NEVER BEEN MORE POPULAR. RELATIONS BETWEEN AMERICAN AND SAUDI OFFICIALS REMAIN CORDIAL AND SAUDI CENSORS KEEPING ALL MENTION OF U.S. RESUPPLY TO ISRAEL OUT OF THE MEDIA. SAUDIS NEVERTHELESS CONSIDER PRESENT MOMENT TO BE OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE OF U.S.-SAUDI RELATIONS; SOME URGED THAT SAUDI ARABIA REORIENT ITS ECONOMIC/MILITARY OPTIONS TOWARDS EEC. MANY FEEL IT IS UP TO SUPER-POWERS TO STOP THE FIGHTING. RAMADAN FAST PROBABLY HAS DAMPENED SAUDI INTEREST IN POLITICS. END SUMMARY.

1. WITH SOME SOLDIERS ON THE "FRONT LINES" AND WORLD ATTENTION ON SAUDI ARABIA'S RESERVE WEAPON--OIL--SAUDIS AT NEARLY ALL LEVELS ARE CAUGHT IN THEIR OWN REAL AND EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE "BATTLE OF DESTINY." PUBLICLY IN THE PRESS, AND IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, KING FAISAL IS REGARDED AS THE HERO AND LEADER OF THE ARAB WORLD. FEW SAUDIS DOUBT THAT THE KING WILL BE UNWILLING TO COMMIT OIL TO THE BATTLE WITH A DELIBERATE REDUCTION IN SUPPLIES TO AMERICA AND TO ITS FRIENDS IN RESPONSE TO THE AMERICAN ARMS SUPPLY LINE TO ISRAEL.

2. DESPITE INTERNATIONAL RADIO NEWS OF AMERICAN ARMS SUPPLIES TO ISRAEL, HOWEVER, SAUDI OFFICIALS HAVE SO FAR REMAINED CORDIAL AND PROVIDED EASY ACCESS TO EMBOFFS ALTHOUGH ARGUMENTATIVE LEVEL OVER U.S. ARMS SUPPLY IS RISING BY THE DAY. A MIDDLE-RANKING MINISTRY OF INFORMATION OFFICIAL REVEALED THAT THE MINISTRY IS (AS WE KNEW) RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAUDI MEDIA BLACKOUT ON NEWS OF AMERICAN ARMS SUPPLIES. HE SAID IT WAS DONE TO PREVENT AROUSING THE SENTIMENTS OF THE PEOPLE.

3. PERSONAL CORDIALITY ASIDE, SAUDIS, EVEN WITH THEIR MODERATE EXPRESSION, LEAVE LITTLE DOUBT AS TO HOW THE ARMS SUPPLY IS REGARDED. INDIVIDUAL REACTIONS HAVE RANGED FROM DISAPPOINTED INCREDULITY TO HOSTILITY. ONE CONFIDENTIAL

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RIYADH CIVIL OFFICIAL ASKED, "ARE YOU GOING TO GO TO WAR WITH US?" THIS QUESTION ALSO EXPRESSES THE FEAR--PROMPTED BY ACTUAL AND RUMORED U.S. MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS AND AIDED BY REFERENCES TO LEBANON 1958--OF DIRECT U.S. INTERVENTION IN THE AREA.

4. U.S. PRESENCE IN THE KINGDOM IS NOT GOING UNQUESTIONED DESPITE THE RELATIVE SECURITY THE AMERICAN

COMMUNITY NOW ENJOYS. A SECOND MININF OFFICIAL IN JIDDA SAID THERE WERE ALREADY MANY QUESTIONING AS TO WHY SAG ALLOWS THE AMERICAN EMBASSY TO REMAIN. A RIYADH MINEDUC SECRETARY GENERAL ASKED RHETORICALLY WHY DOES SAUDI ARABIA NEED THE UNITED STATES IN THE NEAR EAST? AFTER ALL, HE SAID, WE CAN ALWAYS TURN TO JAPAN AND ENGLAND OR FRANCE.

5. SAUDIS ALL SEEM TO FEEL THAT THEY AND THEIR NATION ARE FULLY COMMITTED "TO THE BATTLE" AND ARE MODEST AND IDEALISTIC IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS. THEY ARE NOT WILLING TO PREDICT VICTORY FOR EITHER SIDE. ONE KEY CONTACT REASONED THAT WITH ARMS GOING TO BOTH SIDES THE FIGHTING WILL CONTINUE INDEFINITELY BECAUSE NEITHER SIDE IS WILLING TO RELINQUISH ANY GAINS IT HAS MADE NOR TO AGREE TO A CEASEFIRE IN PLACE. RESPONDING TO THIS SAME POINT ANOTHER SAUDI ADDED THAT IT WOULD BE UP TO THE SUPER-POWERS TO STOP THE FIGHTING. COMMENT: RAMADAN IS OBSERVED MORE VIGOROUSLY IN SAUDI ARABIA THAN PERHAPS ANYWHERE ELSE IN ISLAMIC WORLD. AS RESULT SAUDIS ARE FAMISHED BY DAY, GLUTTED BY NIGHT, AND HENCE EVEN LESS DISPOSED THAN THEY OTHERWISE WOULD BE TO OVERT POLITICAL AGITATION.  
AKINS

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**TAGS:** PFOR, SA, XF  
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